

## I. INTRODUCTION

Straddling the Red Clay Creek in Christiana and Mill Creek hundreds, the area under examination (hereafter referred to as Greenbank) lies along Delaware Route 41, between Delaware Route 2 (Kirkwood Highway) and Washington Avenue (Figure 1). This area has been earmarked for highway upgrading by the Delaware Department of Transportation. Greenbank is situated in the Piedmont Zone as outlined in the *Delaware Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> This zone describes an area north of the fall line in New Castle County characterized by nearly level to steep hills and clay soils mixed with loose rock. Another feature of the zone is major and minor streams that flow primarily north to south into the Christina River and then east into the Delaware River. The Piedmont Zone encompasses all of Brandywine, Christiana, and Mill Creek hundreds, a large portion of White Clay Creek Hundred, and northern Pencader Hundred.

Three properties impacted by the proposed road improvement are significant by National Register of Historic Places criteria. The William Elliot House and the Andrew Jackson Williams House are both associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A). These two houses document the growth of the Greenbank area from a predominantly rural agricultural landscape into industrial and manufacturing communities, and thus they are descriptive of the historic themes Manufacturing (6D) and Transportation & Communication (12D) in the period 1830-1880 +/- as delineated in the *Delaware Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*. Manufacturing, defined as the mechanical or chemical transformation of inorganic or organic materials into new products, is characterized by mills, factories, or plants. Transportation & Communication is defined as enterprises engaged in passenger and freight transportation by railway, highway, water, or air, or furnishing services related to transportation. The Elliot and Williams houses also relate to the historic theme Architecture, Engineering & Decorative Arts (13D) in the same period. This theme encompasses all

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<sup>1</sup> David L. Ames, Bernard L. Herman, and Rebecca J. Siders, *The Delaware Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan* (Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1987), p. 86.

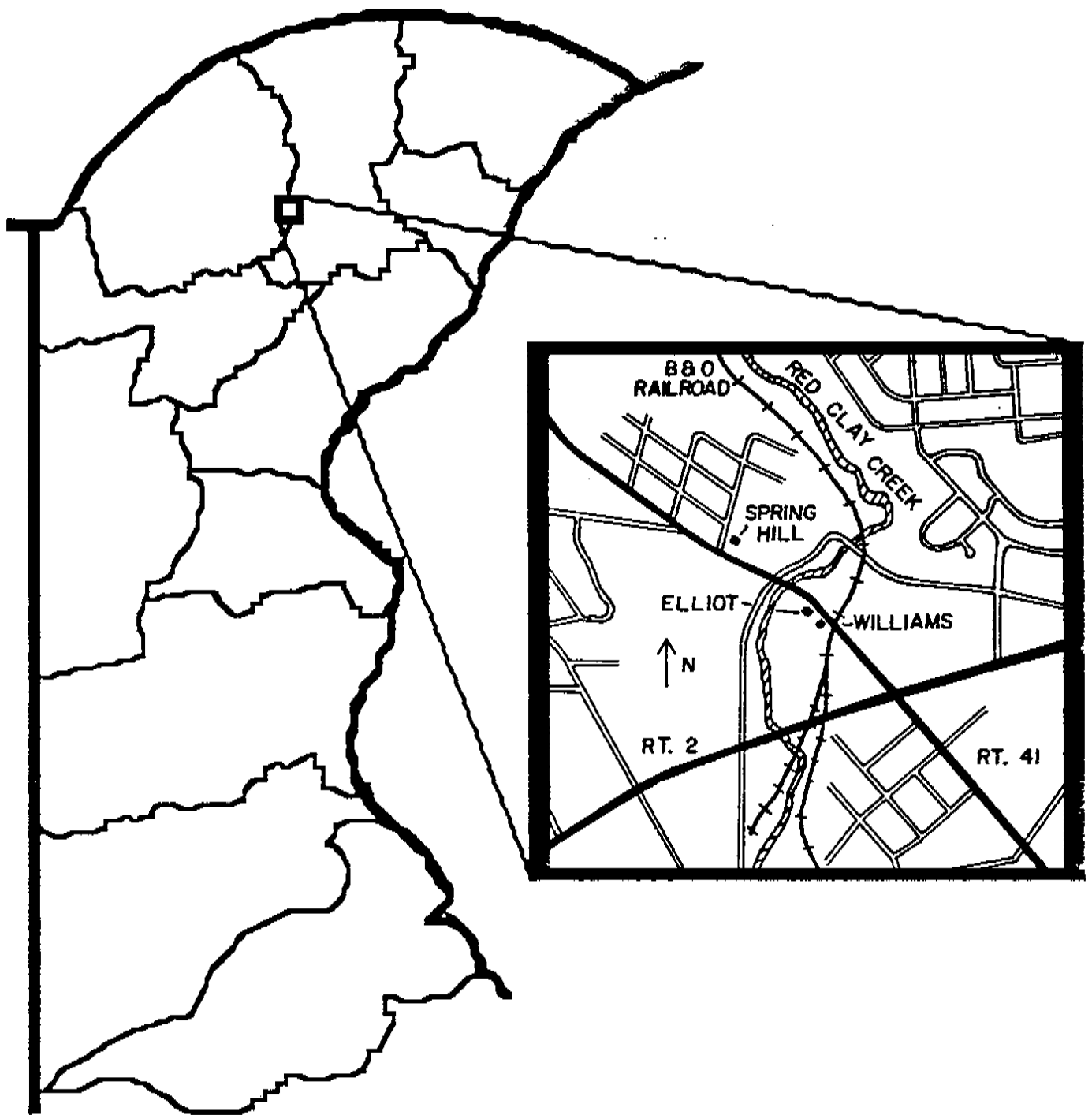


FIGURE 1 : Map of New Castle County with detail of the Greenbank area  
Source: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering

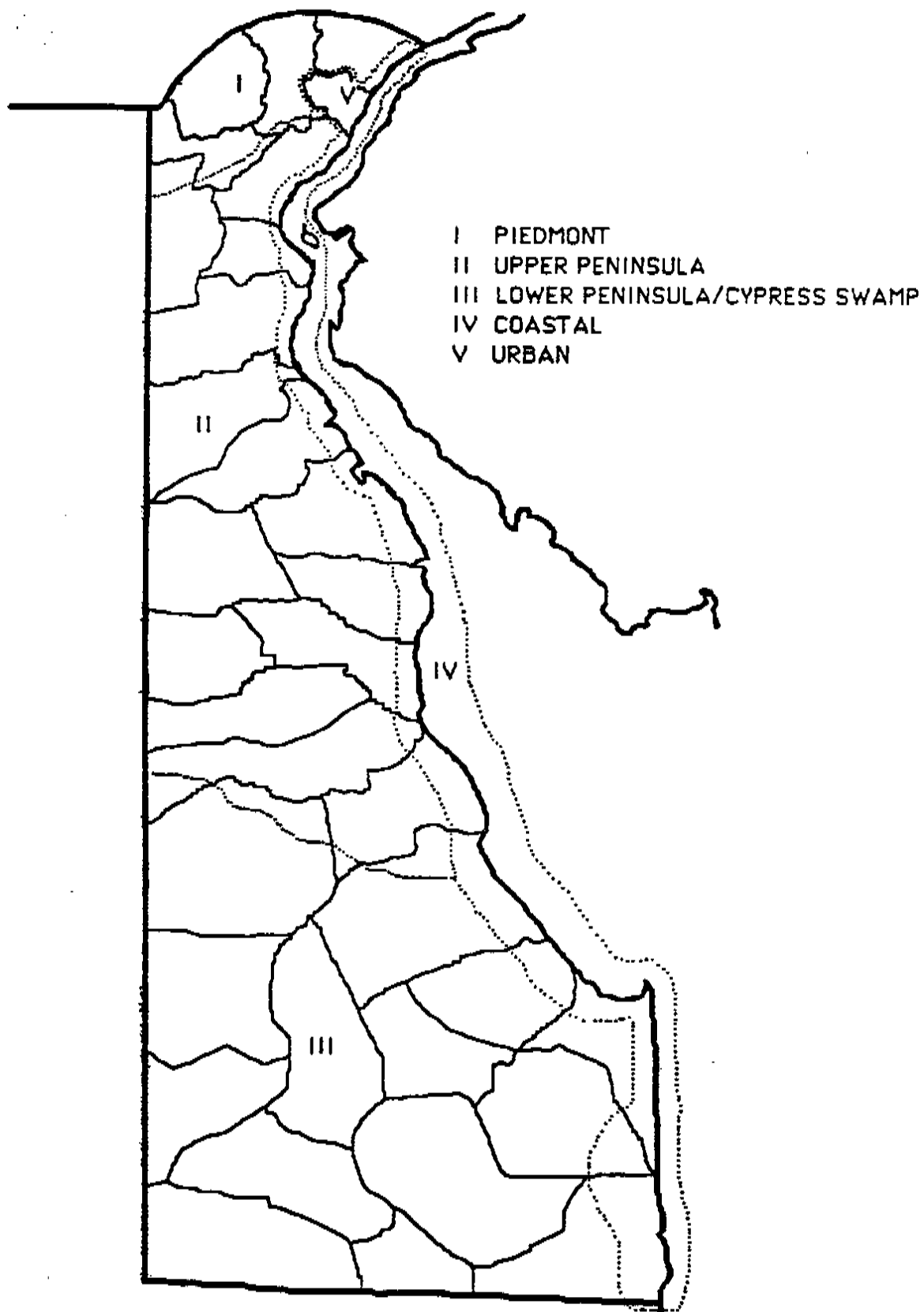


FIGURE 2: Geographic Zones of the *Delaware Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*

Source: Ames et al. (1987)

structures, sites, building plans, and styles which historically trace the development of material culture. Material culture is any significant artifact reflecting individual and social tastes and trends that helps us understand the psychological needs and motivations of the people who crafted them.<sup>2</sup>

The third building, Spring Hill, embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction (Criterion C). Spring Hill is an excellent example of the remodeling of dwellings and landscapes using Colonial Revival stylistic motifs. Primarily descriptive of the historic theme Architecture, Engineering & Decorative Arts (13E) in the period 1880-1940 +/-, as outlined in the *Delaware Statewide Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan*, Spring Hill also relates to the historic themes Suburbanization (15E) and Transportation & Communication (12E). Suburbanization is defined as a settlement pattern on the urban fringe at the interstices between urban and rural development.<sup>3</sup>

Two chronological periods and themes describe the properties under examination: 1830-1880 +/-, Industrialization & Capitalization, and 1880-1940 +/-, Urbanization & Suburbanization. The period 1830-1880 +/- was characterized by an expansion of industrial manufacturing concerns and the establishment of transportation networks that facilitated the movement of goods and people between rural areas and urban markets.<sup>4</sup> Although industry and manufacturing did greatly increase during this period, the landscape of the Piedmont Zone remained largely rural and agricultural. Water-powered mills grew up in the many river and stream valleys of the zone and spurred new communities in rural New Castle County. Turnpikes and railroads were built, linking these communities and manufacturing establishments with urban markets and shipping centers that distributed their manufactured goods and produce throughout the United States. The period 1880-1940 +/- witnessed a centralization of industry and manufacturing in the growing urban center of Wilmington. There was a parallel population movement out

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<sup>2</sup> Ames et al., pp. 95, 97, 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ames et al., p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent general history of Delaware during this period see Thomas J. Scharf, *History of Delaware 1609-1888* (Philadelphia: L. J. Richards & Co., 1888).

of the city into suburban residential areas. Boosted by the development of alternate power sources, more and more industry located in Wilmington, where transportation networks, business and commercial concerns, and a large labor supply were readily available. As urban manufacturing enterprises drew workers from rural areas and from immigrant populations, other segments of society were moving into the surrounding suburban neighborhoods. Aided by new paved roads and public transportation such as trolleys, suburban districts radiated out of Wilmington, first north into Claymont and Arden, then south and west into Elsmere, Newport, and Stanton.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard L. Herman and Rebecca J. Siders, *Delaware Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan: Historic Contexts* (Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1986), pp. 33-42.

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